

encompasses all steeples
as she lies, orient moths
 flying from her mind
making a mockery of the clock.

we know the stories,
 of nuts and oil,
 our hand-strain measured
by the wrench;
building structures
 with our failing bones --
 still the sun shines through them,
and we
 cast no shadow ...

and look toward the sea
 where a figure,
 star sunk in its head,
 rises, waist-deep wading in ...
stand up, master us, oh man, beast,
 or woman ...

Galleons

Outside the flowering oleanders
 become insidious,
 grow eyes

girls pass;
 a snake climbs the wall
 and licks his lips at the clock

the desk slides across the room,
 cannons rolling in a ship

on a bald hill
 a mongrel
 pitted with mange
 wags his head at a white moon.

Arizona Highways

World famous it can be had
 almost anywhere, in supermarkets,
 in drug stores piled next to True Confessions
for sale in billiard rooms,
 and even (I must imagine this, having
 never been there) on the stalls
 beneath the greasy green lights of New York

a jocular prose telling our conditions,
 historical anecdotes, and articles teachers

can be safe reading to their high-school classes;
even poems.

pictures of snow on cactus.

the Governor cited it: "the major
impetus building our tourist trade;"
then lapsed back grunting
into his smoke.
snowbirds ask for "The Bible of the State,"
send yearly subscriptions
to crippled Aunts hacking
and blizzard-bound back home

with a note,
"picking oranges at Christmas,
arthritis all but gone ..."
in their spongy air-conditioned cars
ride toward the locale
of a recent article,
flushed and knowledgeable,
ride through our forests ...

our eyes following them, the soul's
needles knowing
of it all the pictures
lie the least,
the account of a virgin's
internal organs, about to
be ravished ...

Soft Tacos

If someone could stop
the locomotive that pulls every
day at two toward Paisano Pass,
going backwards and
white volutions of smoke

pouring from its rear,
a solid tearing into
puffs that circle counterclockwise around us

from the rickety village we watch,
poorly armed with rakes
and straw swats; on the hillsides
springs stop. cows stand eaten
by rust and wired to the stubble.
it never reaches the top

midgrade Mescaleros
attack it, whooping
from burrows, shoot rubber arrows
that grow on our roofs.
sit astride its back
stuffing themselves with cake